



## Commemoration of 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations & 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of United Nations Association of Sri Lanka



# Message from Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs

I am pleased to send this message to the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, on the occasion of the commemoration the 75th United Nations Day.

It is noteworthy that the UNASL formed in 1950, was admitted as a member of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) in 1951, five years before Sri Lanka became a member of the United Nations, in December, 1955.

The UNASL has continued to work towards fulfilling its objectives and creating better awareness of the significance of the United Nations and the



**Dinesh Gunawardena**

functions of the UN system.

Further, the UNASL Study Circle operating in schools islandwide over the years, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, is highly commendable and the activities provided through this program which include seminars, lectures, educational sessions, interschool competitions, awareness on drug abuse, protection of the environment, non-

communical diseases with special emphasis on Diabetes and promoting the sustainable development goals are greatly beneficial to students who would eventually be the future leaders

of our nation.

It is also important to reflect on the relations between Sri Lanka and the UN over the years. From the outset, Sri Lanka has been a very active member of the United Nations.

The co-operation between Sri Lanka and the UN over a wide range of matters has been mutually beneficial and contributed positively to achieving greater peace and prosperity for Sri Lanka and her people.

Another matter of great significance is that our Sri Lankans have played an important role in the UN system over the years while our armed forces have contributed substantially towards UN peace keeping efforts.

I extend my warm felicitations and best wishes to the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka and for its continued service.

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF UNASL

The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and its founding Charter. This anniversary comes in a time of great disruption for the world, compounded by an unprecedented global health crisis due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, with severe economic and social impacts. But it is also a reminder that times of struggle can become an opportunity for positive change and transformation. United Nations having established after World War II with the aim of preventing future wars, officially came into existence on 24 Oct 1945 hence United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 Oct each year. Maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development and upholding International Law being the key objectives, membership of UN has grown up to 193 representing almost all the sovereign states in the world. Superbly set up main organs of the UN- the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat - which are also formed along with the UN in 1945 have been committed and dedicated to ensure that UN achieves its objectives. On behalf of United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, I wish to congratulate the President of the General Assembly, Secretary General and all the member countries of United Nations for their amazing efforts to transform our world by promoting prosperity whilst protecting the planet.

The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka (UNASL), established on 19 Oct 1950, five years prior to Sri Lanka obtaining membership of the United Nations, is one of the oldest Non-Government organizations in the country. UNASL is registered as an incorporated body in accordance with the Company Act No. 17 of 1982 and under the amendment to this Act in 2007. The Association is also registered with the

Department of the Social Services and the NGO Council. The UNASL was admitted to the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) as the National Affiliated in 1951 and WFUNA, headquartered in Geneva, has a membership of over 125 countries. This year UNASL is celebrating its 70th Anniversary.

It is pertinent to elaborate on the 'Study Circle' maintained by UNASL, a project aimed at school children. Apart from various competitions conducted within the 326 schools registered with the Study Circle, teacher training too had been given similar importance. Conducting health camps, tree planting campaigns, extending assistance to needy people in numerous ways whenever & wherever required, promoting seventeen Sustainable Development Goals declared by the UN and conducting computer classes are some of the activities, among many, carried out by UNASL. Looking back

over the last few years, the key additions to the activities of the association are Inter-Schools Masterminds Competition conducted within the Schools in the Study Circle and computer classes for children and adults. These programmes have added value to our association and support extended by the National Executive Committee towards the success of all above projects & programmes is commendable. I would also like to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Education and their staff for their invaluable cooperation extended to make our efforts successful.

On this occasion, I once again warmly congratulate the United Nations for their 75th Anniversary. I also congratulate the members and their families of the National Executive Committee and the general membership of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka on the successful completion of 70 years of UNASL. May the UNASL grow and prosper in the years to come.



**Maj Gen Upul Perera**  
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# BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA

The United Nations Association in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (UNASL) was established under the guidance of the late Right Honorable D.S. Senanayake PC, MP, the first Prime Minister of Ceylon, on 19th August, 1950, five years before Sri Lanka was admitted as a Member State of the United Nations on 14th December, 1955, together with 15 other countries.

The association is registered under the Companies Act No.17 of 1982 and with the Department of Social Services as well as the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Council.

In 1951, the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka was admitted as the sole National Affiliate of the World Federation of United Nations Association (WFUNA), joining the rest of the world comprising around 100 member countries, in hosting seminars, lectures, educational sessions and inter-school competitions throughout the country, thus creating a better understanding among communities. UNA Sri Lanka is today one of the most senior members of the Federation, actively involved in the work of WFUNA.

The Governors General and subsequently, the President of the Republic of Sri Lanka has always been the patron of the association. Honorable Prime Minister, the Chief Vice Patron, Honorable Speaker of Parliament and the Honorable Leader of the Opposition are Vice Patrons.

His Excellency the Late Justice Christopher Gregory Weeramantry, former Vice President of the International Court of Justice, had been the Honorary Vice President of the Association.

UNASL holds its Annual General Meeting on the last Saturday of March every year and the members of the newly elected Committee are sworn in on this day.

The Committee consists of the President who is an eminent citizen of the country and an Executive Committee consisting of the Secretary-General, Executive Chairpersons, Treasurer, Editor, Two Deputy Executive Chairpersons, Seven Assistant Secretary-Generals, three Vice Chairpersons and Seven Committee members.

Several categories of members form the association, namely Life, Special Life, Complimentary, Honorary members, Corporate members, Overseas Life Members, etc.

It also has a conferred category of membership called Diplomatic Membership for Ambassadors and High Commissioners currently accredited to Sri Lanka. A unique feature is that UNASL is perhaps the only organization which has Diplomatic Members.

The Diplomatic members have been contributing immensely towards the activities of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, in the past but have scaled down during the past few years and we propose to re-activate this class of membership and maintain closer

links with the foreign missions in Sri Lanka.

UNASL currently has over 1800 members, comprising Special Life, Life, Annual, Honorary and Corporate Members as well as 326 schools (reaching around 165,000 students) registered under an island wide UNASL Study Circles programme which was introduced in 1981 and is approved by the Ministry of Education.

Through the numerous activities carried out by the UNASL, there are ample opportunities to reflect on the success and challenges of the common people as well as to consider the significant accomplishments the organization has contributed to maintaining peace and security, promoting human rights and democracy, preventive and curative health related activities which include screening and awareness programmes on Diabetes and Vision Care, providing solutions to environmental issues, the alleviation of poverty, economic development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The UNA Sri Lanka is moving forward as a vibrant organization through the tremendous commitment of its volunteers taking the message of the United Nations to the grassroots of the Sri Lankan population, with the co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme in Sri Lanka, which includes the United Nations Information Center.

# Message from the Secretary General United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

The year 2020 marks a significant milestone in the annals of the United Nations. It is a great historic occasion when the United Nations (UN) celebrates 75 years, the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka (UNASL), celebrates its 70th Anniversary, having been established on 19th August, 1950, Five years before Sri Lanka was admitted as a Member State of the United Nations, on 14th December, 1955.

The UNASL is the sole National Affiliate of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) in Sri Lanka having been admitted to the WFUNA in 1951. We are one of the most Senior Members of the WFUNA and are looking forward to submitting our nomination for a seat on the Executive Committee of the WFUNA, in 2021.

I am indeed happy to have been re-elected for the fourth consecutive term as the Secretary General of this prestigious Association which has once again been transformed into an active and vibrant organization, after being on a low profile for at least a decade.

During the year under review, work of the UNASL was hampered to some extent, due to many unforeseen circumstances which were beyond our control. However, the Computer Training Center, which is one of our signature projects, continued, even in a restricted manner, as result of the COVID 19 Pandemic situation.

We have been working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, the United Nations Organization in Sri Lanka and the UN Information Center. The support, co-operation and encouragement extended to us at all times has been very much encouraging and rewarding.

Hopefully, we envisage to have better times in the near future with the disappearance of the current pandemic, which will give us the leverage to move forward, promoting the 17 Sustainable Goals, Tree

Planting, Protection of the Environment and Beaches, Vision Screening, Cataract Surgeries, Seminars and Workshops on Diabetes Awareness, Prevention and Detection, Healthy Life Style, Health & Safety at Work Places, as well as strengthening the UNASL Study Circle

island wide by conducting Teacher Training programs. Another important area we will be focusing attention on reviving of the Diplomatic Membership program in order to establish better and closer relations and ties with all our friendly countries/nations, worldwide.

To all my colleagues on the Executive Committee of the UNASL, let me emphasize on the need for all of us, to get onto the field, see the number of people living in abject poverty in our country in particular and the world in general. We need to extend a helping hand and hand of friendship to every one of them, moreover and especially during this pandemic era where daily income earners are unable to make ends meet. We did it in the first phase of the pandemic and we will continue to do it in the future as well.

Further, the youth of our nation are yet another vulnerable sector who need to be nurtured and directed in the right direction and the UNASL Schools Study Circle is an excellent platform for us to ensure this.

It is pertinent to mention that the Membership of the UNASL is the strength of our organization and the commitment and dedication of all members, especially the members of the Executive Committee, should be highly appreciated and acknowledge.

Let us all look forward to a brighter future, which will afford us the opportunity to carry out the gigantic tasks ahead and carry the message of the United Nations to the grassroots, whilst disseminating information and guidelines on all important matters.



Courtesy call  
to UN  
Representative  
in Colombo



## Glimpses of UNASL

## 59th Anniversary of UNASL - 2019



## Interschool Masterminds Competition 2019



## Computer Training Center Award Ceremony - 2019



## UN Day 2019



## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 2020 / 2021

Maj Gen Upul Perera  
PresidentMr. M.M. Zawahir  
Executive ChairmanDr. M.Rushanudeen  
Executive ChairmanErrol G. Smith  
Secretary GeneralRohan Fernando  
TreasurerDharmadasa Vitharana  
Editor/Asst TreasurerSampath Priyankara  
Dy Executive ChairmanRohan Dayaratne  
Dy Executive ChairmanD.M. Siriwardena  
Vice ChairmanDr. M.Z.M. Nizar  
Vice ChairmanDr. K.D.S. Ranasinghe  
Vice ChairmanE. Karunaratne  
Asst. Secretary GeneralDr. S.M.K. Abeywardena  
Asst Secretary GeneralLalith Bandara  
Asst Secretary GeneralAsoka Perera  
Asst Secretary GeneralDr. Anver Dole  
Asst Secretary GeneralDr. Upali Jayawardane  
Asst Secretary GeneralArthi Jayawardane  
Asst Secretary GeneralPanchali Ratnayake  
Executive MemberRavi Nagarajah  
Executive MemberShyama Wijekulasuriya  
Executive MemberKumudu Weerasinghe  
Executive MemberSanjeewa De Silva  
Executive Member

## The Schools Study Circle Programme

Study Circles play a significant role in mobilizing the good work of UN in the school and parents of school children. These study circles promote leadership skills, organizing ability, oratory, knowledge etc among students. Once a year the UNASL selects the best study circles considering their activities viz conducting meetings, observance of UN days, contribution to sustainable development, creative skills etc.

UNASL introduced at the first time the Masterminds Competition on 8th June 2019 at Saffron Beach Hotel, Wadduwa with a view to promoting the concept of Life Long Learning and enhancing the knowledge of students and at the same time enjoy the day of interaction with great minds. Students from 38 schools participated for the master Mind Competition. The contest was conducted as a team event with three members per team. There were six rounds of 10 questions to a round, covering the UN and UNASL, international affairs, Human rights, sustainable development, health & hygiene, current affairs, constitution of Sri Lanka, and general knowledge. This competition was

a new experience and an exciting event for participants.

It is pertinent to mention awards have been distributed to the winning schools and students of essay competition, speech



competition, masterminds competition, best study circles and best teachers in charge of Study Circles at the National Observance of UN day where cultural items have been presented by students in study circle.

**Regional Conferences**  
UNASL conducts regional conferences in order to educate and exchange views with teachers and students in study circles in on a district basis. Usually a seminar is held in one school with the participation of several member schools in the locality.

## Kanagawa art Exhibition.

UNASL forwards artworks of children from Study Circles, to Kanagawa Biennial World Children's Art Exhibition conducted by the Japan Overseas Cooperative Association (JOCA). We are happy to announce that a number of awards have been won by students of Study Circles who have submitted their art work through us. UNASL is pleased to record here that 15 year old Deepika Priyangane, a student from a Study Circle won the World Price in 1983. These awards have been presented at the National Observance of the UN Day

## Teacher Training

With a view to improving awareness of teachers of Study Circles and the public on the UN and current issues of the country public lectures have been arranged by the UNASL. UN Information Centre assisted in various ways in conducting teacher training programmes.

## Newsletter

One in six months UNASL circulates a Newsletter where valuable articles and works of students are included to Study Circles.

## World Environmental Day - 2019



## COVID-19 Project



## At People's Bank

This year, we are celebrating Children's Day by giving special gifts to all our little customers. All you need to do is make a deposit in your **Isuru Udana** or **Sisu Udana** savings accounts between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> December

**PEOPLE'S BANK**

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